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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 7 October 1991, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. SHIHABI (Saudi Arabia)

later: Mr. GYAW (Myanmar)
(Vice-President)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Address by Mr. Kennedy Simmonds, Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis

Statements made by

Prince Mohamed Bolkiah (Brunei Darussalam)
Miss Chiepe (Botswana)
Mr. Gomina-Pampali (Central African Republic)
Mr. Holo (Benin)
Mr. Ngarukiyintwali (Rwanda)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

ADDRESS BY MR. KENNEDY A. SIMMONDS, PRIME MINISTER OF SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will first hear an address by the Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

Mr. Kennedy A. Simmonds, Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis, Mr. Kennedy A. Simmonds, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. SIMMONDS (Saint Kitts and Nevis): I bring the Assembly most sincere greetings from the Government and the people of Saint Kitts and Nevis, and I deem it an esteemed pleasure and a distinct honour to address this our forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

I join in all sincerity with those who have preceded me in congratulating the former President, Guido de Marco of Malta, on his skilful handling of our past deliberations during a period of unprecedented challenges.

Then I hasten to welcome our new President, Samir Shihabi of Saudi Arabia, whom I wish to assure of my country's firm support and continued cooperation. The very astute way in which you have been guiding this session, Mr. President, deserves our highest commendation and portends well for a successful and fruitful forty-sixth session.

Next, I wish to pay a special tribute to Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, who continues to serve our Organization with demonstrative dignity, elegance, and excellence, amidst difficult and trying

(Mr. Simmonds, Saint Kitts and Nevis)

times. His focus has always been international peace and security for the peoples of the world. His leadership has been masterful in a period of great upheaval and tremendous change.

Mr. Secretary-General, my Government and people salute you; we stand in awe of your indefatigable commitment; and we pledge our support as you continue to serve the international community in the proficient and effective manner to which we have grown accustomed.

There have been times in the past when the relevance of the United Nations has been questioned, when the will of its Members to be resolute in defence of the weak has been in doubt. Not anymore. This assembly of nations has acted to ensure the restoration of sovereignty to one of its smaller Members, Kuwait, and the world looks on with appreciation. Most are supportive, some are still derisive, none remain indifferent. The United Nation system is experiencing its finest hour - still, it is a time of enormous challenge and opportunity.

The vibrancy of the Assembly is reflected in the plethora of new Members. Saint Kitts and Nevis was warmly received into this body, and today I deem it a pleasure and an honour to extend a warm welcome to the new Members. I welcome the Republic of Korea, our friends of long standing, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As is well known, my Government has consistently advocated the admission of both countries for several years. I welcome the Marshall Islands and Micronesia, as well as the Republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. I am pleased to assure the Governments and peoples of these new Members that my Government and people will extend to them most active cooperation in the cause of world peace and human development.

(Mr. Simmonds, Saint Kitts and Nevis)

While democracy is breaking out all over the world, somehow the beleaguered people of Haiti continue to be denied the opportunity to breathe the pure air of freedom. My country, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and indeed the entire Caribbean community, are deeply shocked by the action of the armed forces in Haiti in illegally seizing President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and members of his administration and usurping the authority of the duly constituted Government. This monstrous and outrageous action by the Haitian military is an unacceptable repudiation of the declared will of the people of Haiti, which was overwhelmingly and unambiguously manifested in the elections of December 1990.

Saint Kitts and Nevis, and indeed the entire Caribbean community, unreservedly condemn this flagrant assault on the unfolding democratic process in Haiti, and demand the restoration of constitutional order and of Father Aristide to the presidency of the Republic.

The Caribbean community has in the past called for concerted international assistance to consolidate democratic gains in Haiti. We repeat that call today. The Caribbean community is working within the Organization of American States to restore democracy to Haiti.

I call on this body, the United Nations, which has acted decisively in other areas of crisis, to move with urgency and purpose to ostracize the illegal regime in Haiti and to take all appropriate measures to restore democracy and the constitutionally elected Government in Haiti.

The people of Haiti cry out in anguish to the world community for deliverance. Let us not fail them this time.

(Mr. Simmonds, Saint Kitts and Nevis)

I wish to focus today on the subject of development through peace as the basis for the new international order.

East-West tension has abated; the Berlin Wall has fallen beneath the surge of freedom; Kuwait has been liberated; some challenges to democracy are being thwarted; and diplomacy and negotiation are more and more being accepted as alternatives to violence and bloodshed.

(Mr. Simmonds, Saint Kitts and Nevis)

The initiative taken by President Bush of the United States of America to implement a unilateral reduction of nuclear weapons is timely and welcome. The response of President Gorbachev of the Soviet Union is a further significant contribution to the reduction of international tensions. We must now seize the opportunity of the moment and work towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

However, world peace must not be viewed only in terms of the absence of world war, the elimination of East-West tension or the achievement of cease-fires. The concept of world peace must be far more fundamental and pervasive. It must mean an acceptance of human equality and dignity, the achievement of social justice and the global preservation of individual human rights. The world must work as assiduously at building the foundations of peace as it did at erecting the bastions of war.

The enhancement of education, the eradication of poverty, the reduction of unemployment, the maintenance of good health, the provision of affordable housing, the adapting of science and technology to socio-economic development - these must be the dividends that flow from diverting global financial resources away from the amassing of armaments, to be invested in human development. This is the challenge we face. This is the new battle we must join - and we must not fail.

The development of all our peoples through peace must be placed against the backdrop of the need for a comprehensive political settlement of disputes, self-determination through free and fair elections and full respect for national sovereignty, together with the repatriation and rehabilitation of displaced persons.

(Mr. Simmonds, Saint Kitts and Nevis)

In essence, a people must have and enjoy the right to determine their political and economic destiny without external intervention. Yet history has shown us that there are times when that right is preserved only by external intervention, or at least condemnation. The emphasis should be on establishing a more equitable world economic order which assists our needy, developing countries with adequate financial, technical and material resources in order that we may pull ourselves up by our bootstraps by way of socio-economic reconstruction. It is for this reason that the Government and the people of Saint Kitts and Nevis join in the cry for a lasting peace in the cauldrons of unrest throughout the world.

We endorse the call for an international peace conference on the Middle East, where all of the issues can be addressed directly and where the rights, responsibilities and concerns of all parties can be defined and addressed.

At this juncture, I pay further tribute to the Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, as he perseveres in his efforts to encourage harmonious coexistence among the peoples in that still troubled Middle East area.

At the same time, I commend the Government of the United States of America as it seeks, through the untiring diplomatic endeavours of Secretary of State Baker, to bring the protagonists to the negotiating table.

The violent upheaval in Yugoslavia is also cause for grave concern. While it is true that the people themselves must determine and shape their future, we can and should endeavour to bring our influence to bear to bring an end to the violence and bloodshed and a return to stability.

(Mr. Simmonds, Saint Kitts and Nevis)

The intransigence of Iraq continues to cause disquiet in the international community. We must maintain appropriate sanctions until the relevant resolutions of the Security Council have been implemented in full and until the people of Iraq, as well as their neighbours, can live without fear of intimidation from either conventional or nuclear armaments.

South Africa continues to be another area of grave concern to us. While we welcome the steps taken by the De Klerk Administration to dismantle the pillars of apartheid, we must keep in mind that apartheid is not ended. Until there is equality and respect for individual rights, regardless of race, our objective has not been achieved. The ultimate objective must continue to be the achievement of one person, one vote. We cannot accept one standard of freedom and democracy for people in Europe and the Americas, and a lesser standard of freedom and democracy for the people of South Africa.

The people of Saint Kitts and Nevis, and, indeed, the Caribbean community, will maintain our principled stand of continuing sanctions against the regime in South Africa, and we oppose the wholesale lifting of sanctions at this time. We consider the lifting of sanctions now to be premature, and caution that it could result in delaying the inevitable end of apartheid. I call on the international community not to retreat when the end is in sight. I call on the international community not to abandon the oppressed people of South Africa at this critical time, but to stand fast until justice, equality and freedom become realities for all.

Democracy and individual rights and freedoms are all part of our Caribbean way of life. We want nothing less for our African brothers and sisters.

(Mr. Simmonds, Saint Kitts and Nevis)

It is cause for deep concern that peace and justice continue to elude the people of Cambodia. They, too, have a right to aspire to the fruits of economic development. We call for all constructive efforts to continue until the reaching of a settlement which brings an end to conflict and ushers in an era of development.

My Government supports the new direction towards fundamental reform and democratization in the Soviet Union. It has undoubtedly contributed to the removal of East-West tensions, a development that has been received with a global sigh of relief.

I have no doubt that there will be a major mobilization of financial, technical and material resources to assist with the economic transformation of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. This is as it should be. However, the United Nations must be particularly vigilant to ensure that the socio-economic problems of developing countries, like mine, are not marginalized and relegated to the backwater of human development. There must be a redirection of resources, and a mobilization of additional resources, away from the economy of war to the economy of development.

The United Nations must be an instrument of peacemaking and enhancement of the quality of life. The Organization can thus direct and coordinate responses to the developmental needs of small States. We need an Organization that remains committed to the sustained growth and development of all of its Member States, in order to build and maintain a world partnership.

(Mr. Simmonds, Saint Kitts and Nevis)

We must, therefore, commit ourselves to reinforcing the multilateral approach to the solution of our problems. It behoves us to strengthen the international system of which the United Nations forms the nucleus. The international community must rally around the system if it is to fulfil its obligation to restore and ensure international peace and security in order that economic and socio-cultural development may prosper, bloom, and bear good fruit.

The issue of development and the environment is so fundamental to the achievement of a better quality of life that I must address it. It is axiomatic that all of us share a responsibility for protecting and preserving the environment. It seems, however, that in this regard some countries are more equal than others.

In 1966, a major airline manufacturer found it necessary to destroy 630 acres of lush forest to establish a factory complex. This was a case of development taking priority over environment. The significant development value of that decision is totally accepted and unquestioned today. On the other side of the ledger, however, we find the disturbing trend where environmental questions, sometimes real and sometimes imagined, are becoming major conditionalities attached to development assistance for poor countries. Are we to understand that development must take priority over environment in developed countries, but that the environment must take precedence over development in developing countries that are being strangled by a hostile world economic system?

The ensuring of environmental protection and development must not run counter to a country's strategies for socio-economic advancement. There must be a balance between environmental concerns and a country's overall

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development so that environmental issues ought not to become a deterrent to development in the poorer countries.

Additionally, it must be appreciated that environmental concerns differ from country to country, and from region to region. In the developed world the accent is on issues like the ozone layer, acid rain and toxic waste. In Saint Kitts and Nevis, however, we need direct assistance in the areas of solid and liquid waste management, marine life protection, beach conservation, reef preservation, the prevention of coastal erosion, and the full integration of marine resources into the national development plans.

I must at this point make particular reference to the Caribbean, stretching from Belize to Guyana, and linked by small, island developing States from the Bahamas to Trinidad.

We are a string of pearls linking North and South America, beautiful but vulnerable. We are vulnerable to natural disasters, vulnerable to global economic developments over which we have no control. We are vulnerable to an international economic order that determines and sets at a low level the prices of the things we sell, and escalates the prices of the things we buy. We find ourselves consigned to a treadmill of poverty, debt, and underdevelopment.

However, because of our location close to the Americas, and the cross-fertilisation of cultures and values, fuelled by the revolution in electronics and communication, our people have developed high expectations. We have helped ourselves considerably through individual and regional effort, and international support.

While our location provides, on the one hand, opportunities for development, particularly in tourism which is important for all of us, it is

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also a source of great challenge and danger. We are also vulnerable to the narco-terrorists, the drug traffickers. Together we must continue to wage all-out war on these purveyors of death and destruction. We continue to need more assistance in reducing demand through education, health care, and rehabilitation, and we must intensify our combined efforts in the area of interdiction and enforcement.

At this time when the attention of the international community is taken up by events of monumental proportions throughout the world, I feel I must endeavour to keep the development concerns of island developing nations on the international agenda.

There have also been positive developments in our region in relations between neighbours. I must commend the Governments of Belize and Guatemala on having reconciled their differences in the interest of good neighbourliness. The declaration that Guatemala recognizes Belize as an independent State not only allows Belize to participate fully in the Central American integration process, but gives a tremendous boost to Caribbean-Central American relations. My Government looks with optimism to the prospect of both Governments' continuing negotiations so as to iron out remaining difficulties, in the interest of peaceful coexistence between the two countries.

In addition, my Government commends the United Nations and the Organization of American States on the role they have played and will continue to play in providing avenues through which workable solutions can be found to territorial disputes.

At this time in our history we are seriously challenged to bring an end to conflicts and to stimulate a resurgence of human development. Within the parameters of this broad objective, there must be a place for special

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attention to be given to the welfare of our children. We gave that process special emphasis when we met here at the special Heads of State and Government Summit for Children. Let us commit and rededicate ourselves to rise to the challenge of making peace mean development for people everywhere, but let us make it specially meaningful for our children as we provide for their health, educational, recreational and psychological needs. In this we can have no nobler objective.

The PRESIDENT (Interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saint Kitts and Nevis for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Kennedy Simmonds, Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis, was escorted from the rostrum.

Prince MOHAMED BOLKIAH (Brunei Darussalam): Sir, I should like to congratulate you upon your election as President of the Assembly at this session. I am very pleased to see such a distinguished office held by a representative of our close friend, Saudi Arabia. May I also express my appreciation to the outgoing President, Guido de Marco. At the same time, I particularly wish to thank the Secretary-General for the excellent work he has done, often under very difficult circumstances.

Brunei Darussalam would also like to welcome seven new Members of the United Nations: the Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Brunei Darussalam still maintains what I described here last year as "cautious optimism". However, we have seen a number of problems which demand early solution. We cannot put them off until a later date. They are bound to affect the positive trends which have started to bring about a new order in Europe. Unless we can try to do something about them urgently, they are going to become very grave indeed.

We can see that there is already much uncertainty in many parts of the world. The start of a new world order has perhaps helped to remove some of the outward signs of long-term problems; but it has not yet shown us how to go about dealing with the problems themselves. Their basic causes are still with us. I am very much encouraged by the many positive efforts which have been made to create a peaceful and stable world. Nevertheless, I also think that there is a real need to prevent old problems recurring.

The cold war may indeed be over, but we can see that many nations are still very worried about their security. Noted political gains must be

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balanced against continuing violence, social unrest and grave civil strife in several regions.

Moreover, three specific global issues present themselves. I refer here firstly to the risk that certain development programmes may lead to great environmental damage. Secondly, I note that the drug menace is presenting a lasting threat to the welfare of the young people who constitute the productive sector of all nations. Finally, I add to these our ever-increasing ability to cause human and material destruction. I am worried most of all by the fact that we do not seem to have found a way to control the development and spread of such technology.

These issues represent security problems which are just as dangerous as any act of open hostility. They reflect a disturbing level of uncertainty. Despite positive global changes, they add up to a host of problems which no one country can solve alone. They are all likely to lead to disputes. The only way we can stop these turning into open war, I believe, is for us to act in unity. Therefore we need to identify security concerns in a global context. If that can be done, then we must work together to find solutions. I see those two needs as crucial.

As I have said, I do not overlook the positive developments we have seen in the post-cold-war period. They have offered signs that it is possible for us to move forward together. I think that the recent announcements made by the Presidents of the United States and the Soviet Union about reducing nuclear arms are most welcome initiatives. So are the encouraging responses given by other nuclear Powers. They indicate that a new process is under way. I believe that it may start to answer the repeated calls for action in this area which have been made by many United Nations Members.

(Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Brunei Darussalam)

I am also particularly glad about the way in which the United Nations has become involved in trying to help solve regional conflicts. I am pleased to see us beginning to address global issues together. However, the final success of the United Nations depends on the attitude of its Member countries and organizations. It is up to all of us to contribute to building up the type of United Nations we want to see. Every Member of this body should take an active part in helping to define its role. In this way, we can be confident that the United Nations will not see solutions to problems from limited perspectives.

The post-cold-war period is a time to call upon Member States to do everything possible to reach a shared understanding on how bilateral and regional problems are to be resolved. It is perhaps our most urgent need. Without it there can be no agreement on what must be done to address the problems of social and economic development; there can also be little common ground when it comes to deciding what we must do to protect the environment.

Other moves call upon us to recognize that the scope of our current problems demands a broad approach. To this end, we must encourage better understanding, cooperation and interdependence. As the Persian Gulf war has shown, the end of the cold war will not mean the end of regional disputes which affect international peace. More positively, however, it has demonstrated the need to cooperate. It has shown that we are capable of working together towards United Nations goals when a common threat to our global community arises. It has also shown that we can do that even though bilateral and multilateral disputes may continue to disrupt regional peace.

(Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Brunei Darussalam)

In this regard, I think that regional institutions have a most important role to play in making sure that regions remain stable. Over the past two years we have been pleased to observe this taking place in Europe, America, Africa, Asia and the Pacific.

In particular, we welcome recent developments in Cambodia as the parties and countries concerned with the conflict work towards its final comprehensive settlement.

In Korea, we believe that the regional framework for international cooperation which has promoted North-South dialogue has been most valuable.

In South Africa, we have seen how countries and international organizations finally persuaded the Pretoria regime to set about removing apartheid.

Similarly, in the Middle East, the initiatives taken by the United States, together with the actions of the international community and regional institutions, have brought us some renewed hope. We feel that a lasting peace and a just settlement within the terms of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) may ultimately be achieved.

There are of course many other areas of pressing concern. I think that countries can contribute much towards improving them through their various regional or international associations. I feel that it is important to recognize that regional dialogue serves to increase the sense of security felt by all parties. It will certainly help to ensure that one nation's security concern does not become another's security threat. In summary, I believe that a situation whereby regional bodies assert increasingly important roles in support of United Nations objectives is a realistic vision.

(Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Brunei Darussalam)

Today I have offered some thoughts on problems which are still outstanding security concerns despite a new political climate. In their light I have also stressed that we have already in place some practical means of addressing them. We need to use them. We should accept that common global problems require unified action. We should not have to wait for bilateral or regional differences to be settled before taking such action. Responsible regional organizations can be of great assistance in deciding what form it should take. This situation, however, can only be brought about if nations demonstrate their political will when it comes to supporting international principles.

If this is done, a climate of cooperation and negotiation can truly emerge from a common perspective. I contend that the welfare and security of all people are increasingly served by a strong United Nations in which regional organizations play vital supporting roles. I believe that the means I have outlined are available to us. We can indeed create a situation whereby individual Member nations see solutions to problems in terms of collective security. Brunei Darussalam will lend its fullest support to all moves designed to encourage such a process.

Miss CHIEPE (Botswana): Mr. President, many speakers who preceded me to this rostrum have been more than eloquent in describing the rare qualities of leadership you bring to the presidency of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. What more can we add other than to assure you, Sir, that we too repose our confidence unstintingly in your ability to steer the deliberations of this momentous session to a fruitful conclusion. And we congratulate you, most sincerely, on your election to this high office.

(Miss Chiepe, Botswana)

The distinguished Foreign Minister of Malta lived up to our expectations during his tenure of office. We salute him for a job well done.

We welcome to our midst the seven new Members that have just joined the United Nations. We wish them well. An increase of seven new Members can only enhance the strength and vitality of our Organization and advance it further towards universality.

Under the stable and purposeful leadership of our indefatigable Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, the United Nations has continued to respond forcefully and creatively to the fast-changing panorama of human history. The past year has been particularly challenging, and even daunting, for our Secretary-General and for the United Nations. The Gulf crisis which was in full bloom during our last session, early this year burgeoned into a full-scale war whose consequences are still reverberating. Thankfully, a renascent United Nations was not found wanting in its response to the crisis; aggression has been defeated; the Emirate of Kuwait has been liberated. We salute the Secretary-General under whose leadership the United Nations has been given a new lease on life.

As the old world of nuclear terror, political tyranny and ideological confrontation gives way to the new world in which our major preoccupation is whether we have the capacity "to execute the increasingly versatile projects of peace", (A/46/1, page 4) to quote the Secretary-General's report

(Miss Chiepe, Botswana)

(A/46/1, p. 4), the leading role of the United Nations in the shaping of the new world order has become very crucial indeed. As the Secretary-General's report also states: "The effectiveness of the United Nations can no longer be in doubt". (ibid.)*

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* Mr. Gyaw (Myanmar), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Miss Chiepe, Botswana)

What continues to be in doubt, in our view, is our readiness, we the Members of the Organization, to give the United Nations the wherewithal to perform its escalating tasks. The peace that is breaking out everywhere in the world needs nurturing while, at the same time, new conflicts now erupting as a consequence of the precipitate expiration of the old order are threatening the new world order in its infancy. And we expect the United Nations, trammelled by unpaid arrears and late payment of contributions, to rise to the occasion, to police peace and manage conflict with an empty treasury. Mission impossible!

Nevertheless, the world is changing for the better. A new cycle of history whose character we must all participate in shaping has begun. Throughout the globe today the common man and woman are insisting on regaining mastery of their destiny. Multi-party democracy has become the common clarion call of mankind, a triumphant affirmation of the phenomenon of peoples' power. Be it in Africa, Eastern Europe or elsewhere in the world today, an inexorable process of renewal is in progress.

And yet as the struggle for democratic pluralism intensifies new conflicts arise while old and hitherto suppressed antagonisms are set free. The historical excesses of extreme nationalism and ethnocentrism are threatening the peaceful evolution of the new world order we all seek to nurture. Change is not coming peacefully everywhere. It rarely does. Our hearts go out to the people of Yugoslavia and other Eastern European States that are caught in the throes of difficult and painful transitions. This is what the Secretary-General, with his usual candour and precision, calls "a unique justaposition of promise and perils" (A/46/1, p. 5).

(Miss Chiepe, Botswana)

In our view, however, the promise is transcendent. A world free of the threat of nuclear holocaust and political tyranny and totalitarianism is not necessarily bereft of conflict, but it is the best insurance for peace and tranquillity among nations and peoples. There is the understandable fear and anxiety that we have begun the era of monopolarity, the domination of the world by one super-Power unrestrained by the checks and balances of bipolarity, and that more tyranny and fear is likely to be perpetrated by the lone super-Power in the new world order. Such apprehensions are understandable, even as we fervently cherish the hope that with a strengthened United Nations and the ascendancy of economics as the locus of power the new world order will be one characterized by democratic multipolarity driven by interdependent economic competition. And it must be emphasized that a durable new world order can result only from our united efforts, not from a lone super-Power's fiat.

The agenda of the forty-sixth session is, like its predecessors, long and varied. This is an indication that we still have a long way to go to resolve the many problems that confront our Organization. It is hoped that the new mood at the United Nations will enhance our capacity to search for solutions to these problems.

We have seen how successful the United Nations can be if its endeavours in the service of peace enjoy the support of its membership in both the Security Council and the General Assembly. The Security Council, in particular, has demonstrated that, united, it can act decisively as a preserver of international peace and security.

In Asia, at long last the end of the Cambodian tragedy appears to be at hand. The parties to that long-festering conflict which has wasted millions

(Miss Chiepe, Botswana)

of innocent lives have finally agreed on an electoral system to be used to conduct multiparty democratic elections. Here again the instrumentality of the United Nations as an impartial arbiter in the resolution of intractable problems has proved its undoubted efficacy.

Unfortunately, Afghanistan is still bleeding, a continued victim, not of the United Nations failure to devise a successful solution to the civil war there but, rather, a victim of the refusal by the parties to the civil war to implement the letter and spirit of the United Nations Geneva Agreements. It is hoped that the recent decision by the United States and the Soviet Union to terminate the supply of arms to the belligerents will starve both parties of the incentive to prolong the needless blood-letting.

But the United States and the Soviet Union are not the only suppliers of arms to the belligerents. Consequently, the United Nations must make it clear that subsidiary suppliers of arms to fuel and sustain the Afghan tragedy are also duty bound to respect United Nations-brokered peace agreements.

In the Middle East, the guns of war are silent at least on the Iraq-Kuwait front. Thank God, Kuwait's freedom and independence have been restored. A dangerous precedent has not been allowed to scar the face of humanity - that a small, defenceless independent and sovereign State be obliterated from the face of the earth with impunity by a powerful neighbour. We can argue interminably about the excesses or depredations of Desert Storm, but the reality is that the restoration of Kuwait's existence as a free and independent nation has reassured small, powerless and defenceless States, like my own, of their inalienable right to exist as free and independent nations - provided, of course, that from now on there will be no selective morality in the treatment of aggression by the powerful against the weak.

(Miss Chiepe, Botswana)

The Cyprus question remains as stubborn as ever. There is what is called new thinking in the world today and the world is changing so fast that the map-makers have thrown up their arms in despair and frustration. And yet some things are refusing to change. One of them is the tragic division of the idyllic island of Cyprus, a non-aligned and Commonwealth country that threatens no one. A lot of time and energy has been expended in the search for a solution to the Cyprus problem by the Secretary-General over the years without much luck. The parties are still set in their old positions, oblivious of the buffeting winds of change around them. Cyprus must be reunited, to take its rightful place in the new world order.

The Middle East also remains frozen in the unremitting immobility of the seemingly irreconcilable positions of its conflicting nations. Lebanon has taken decisive steps towards internal peace and national reconciliation while the people of Palestine remain homeless. Israel is continuing to expand Jewish settlements in the occupied territories while professing a commitment to negotiations to reconcile the national aspirations of the Jewish people and their Arab neighbours. Creating facts on the ground in the West Bank and Gaza runs the risk of ensuring the failure of negotiations even before they start.

Botswana fully supports the United States initiative aimed at convening a Middle East peace conference, where, we hope, the nations of the area and the Palestinian people will come together at a conference table to find common ground for the harmonization of their conflicting nationalisms. The United States initiative represents an opportunity which can only be missed or wasted at great peril to peace. Israel has the opportunity of a lifetime to satisfy itself that all the Palestinians want is a home of their own in the West Bank

(Miss Chiepe, Botswana)

and Gaza, and not the obliteration of the Jewish State from the face of the Middle East. The Palestinians, equally, are presented with a rare opportunity to clarify whether Israel wants peace, or confirmation of its territorial conquests.

In southern Africa, the situation gives grounds for hope. The last vestige of white minority rule is about to be expunged. South Africa is in the throes of dramatic change despite the seemingly insoluble urban violence that has created the perception that black South Africans cannot realize that the moment of reckoning has arrived - violence evidently orchestrated by sinister elements that are bent on frustrating the birth of a new nation in that strife-torn country.

(Miss Chiepe, Botswana)

The people of South Africa stand poised at the gate of the new South Africa they have sought all these years. The apartheid scaffolding has been removed and dismantled even though the structure - the structure of apartheid - remains intact. The legislative basis of apartheid has been removed for the first time in more than 300 years, and South Africa for all South Africans regardless of colour, race or creed is ready to be negotiated.

There is no time to waste. The conditions of the United Nations consensus Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa may not have been met in letter and spirit, but the time has come for the people of South Africa to proceed to the Conference table to negotiate a new democratic dispensation for their country. The Abuja statement on South Africa issued by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Ad Hoc Committee in July 1991 is unequivocal about the urgent need for negotiations to begin:

> "The Committee underscores the fact that central to the struggle for the eradication of apartheid is the transfer of power to a democratic government elected on the basis of a non-racial and democratic constitution. It reasserts that negotiations leading to the drawing up and adoption of this constitution is now the most urgent and pressing question. To this end, it calls upon the national liberation movements and all the anti-apartheid forces to work in concert within the framework of a patriotic front." (A/46/450, annex, para. 4)

The situation in South Africa today is almost a replica of the situation in Namibia during the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) in that territory. If we are expecting the establishment of perfect peace in South Africa as a prelude to the commencement of the negotiations for a new

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South Africa we are expecting the impossible. The closer we are to the realization of the new South Africa the more desperate and vicious will be the resistance. The negotiations themselves are most likely to be accompanied by the escalation of violence, inspired or free-wheeling, in the townships and elsewhere in South Africa.

Of utmost importance at this crucial juncture is the adoption of a democratic constitution to end once and for all minority rule in South Africa. Political prisoners have been released and are being released and will all be released simply because there is no sense whatsoever in keeping them incarcerated. General amnesty, however imperfect, is now in place under the trusted auspices of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which guarantees the safe repatriation of exiles. The repressive laws that have formed the foundation of apartheid and have been the object of the United Nations anti-apartheid campaign for close to half a century have been abolished. There is today an atmosphere of relatively free political activity in South Africa, free enough at least to allow the convening of an all-party conference to negotiate a new constitution.

Nevertheless, the United Nations must continue to insist on the cessation of violence in the townships and elsewhere in the country so that an atmosphere auspicious for negotiation could be created in South Africa. While the onus for the maintenance of law and order rests with the South African Government, black leaders are also duty bound to contribute to the search for a national solution to the destructive violence. It does nobody any good simply to stand, watch and criticize and allow the dark and sinister forces of hired thugs and assassins to cheat the people of South Africa of their right to be free from the scourge of racial tyranny.

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We are pleased that the United Nations Western Sahara operation was set in motion on 6 September 1990. It is hoped that the two parties to that conflict will cooperate with the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General to ensure that a successful referendum to settle the question of Western Sahara once and for all is held on schedule.

In Central America, it is hoped that the leaders of El Salvador will cooperate with the Secretary-General in his efforts to facilitate negotiations to end the ruinous civil war that has threatened to bleed the country to death. We urge the Security Council to continue to take a keen interest in the issue.

Over the years the world has seen the emergence and growth of what some call a "borderless economy"; and yet the world economy has continued to be controlled by the macroeconomic policies of a handful of countries. We cannot talk about democracy, good governance and transparency at the national level and deny the application of these principles to the management of the international economic system. It is appropriate and indeed desirable that pluralism find a niche in the macroeconomic management of the global economy. The major players in the "borderless economy" should appreciate that this is in their self-interest too. The persistence of the world's economic ills is a sore reminder that some of the prescriptions which are preferred by the major actors have fallen short of addressing the root cause of the problems. The involvement of other States will provide alternative approaches to dealing with these problems.

Botswana welcomes the proposal made by the Secretary-General on 3 July 1991 in his opening statement at the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council on the convening of an international conference on

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development financing. We are pleased that this issue will be given serious consideration during this session of the General Assembly. Now that the distracting East/West divide has been eliminated the time is opportune to attend to the real problems facing humanity. Some of the vast resources that have been spent to produce and maintain weapons of mass destruction should now be channelled towards pressing development problems. It is our sincere hope that the current climate of consensus will be fully taken advantage of in order to reach a satisfactory decision.

We look forward to a successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations. The integration of Eastern and Central Europe into the world economy entails the need for greater access to markets. Resource flows to developing countries and the economies in transition alone, without increased trade opportunities, cannot lead to sustained and sustainable development. There is a new sense of urgency to bring protectionism to an end.

Africa's critical economic situation persists. In many countries the situation has deteriorated. The continent is faced with a crippling debt burden. At the end of 1990 Africa's debt amounted to over $270 billion. Although this amount may appear small compared to global debt figures, the seriousness and enormity of the problem can be readily appreciated when one takes into account the debt-service ratios which are so high that most of the export revenues are used to repay debt instead of financing development. The reduction of debt obligations should be made a major priority if Africa is to be able to face the development challenge in the 1990s. African countries fully understand their responsibility in tackling these problems. They accept the need for policy reorientation aimed at effectively dealing with the

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developmental problems. It is important that the special needs of Africa are not only kept on the international agenda but that genuine efforts are also made to resolve them.

Botswana attaches the utmost importance to issues of environment and development. The conservation of our renewable and non-renewable resources is a major component in the formulation and implementation of development policies. Since independence Botswana has enacted a variety of laws aimed at addressing environmental issues. Last year we adopted a national conservation strategy with a view to ensuring effective coordination between issues of environment and development. The areas of major concern are range-land degradation, the use of wood fuel without replanting trees, the mining of groundwater, the reduction of wildlife species, the generation of wastes which pollute soil and water, and the abandonment of open mining shafts and quarry pits.

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It is Botswana's policy that the responsibility for conservation and protection of the environment should fall upon those who own and/or manage the country's resources. These include communities, farmers, livestock owners, small enterprises and industrialists. In this respect the Government requires sound environmental impact studies for major development projects. It is the aim of Botswana to ensure that the prices of such resources as land, water and forests reflect the scarcity values in order to increase awareness of the need to conserve such resources.

Botswana is committed to playing its part in dealing with issues of environment. But there are limitations as to what a poor developing country can do on its own, given the fact that the question of development is an important aspect of a nation's capacity to address the environmental challenges. In view of this, the 1992 Rio de Janeiro United Nations Conference on Environment and Development will be a historic landmark in multilateral cooperation. It is our fervent hope that the Conference will adopt concrete decisions aimed at addressing the link between environment and development. Many people in developing countries live in abject poverty, and for the poor long-term sustainability plays an insignificant role in decisions on production and consumption. What is uppermost in their minds is how to survive or live from one day to the next. Poverty breeds environmental degradation, which in turn reproduces and reinforces poverty. This first world summit on environment and development should address those issues in clear and unambiguous terms. This would involve, among other things, assisting developing countries to gain access to environmentally sound technologies.

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Botswana reaffirms its faith in the United Nations. This unique Organization has served us well despite the severe constraints that have so often in the past frustrated its endeavours in the service of peace. Released from those constraints and infused with a new dynamism and a renewed sense of purpose, the United Nations has the capacity to give form and shape and meaning to the new world order for the good of mankind as a whole.

Finally, it is our fervent hope that Africa's bid for the post of Secretary-General of the United Nations will be crowned with success. All we ask is to be allowed the opportunity to serve on the thirty-eighth floor.

Mr. GOMINA-PAMPALI (Central African Republic) (interpretation from French): The social upheavals that have occurred in the world, whose consequences have for some time been steering international relations in a new direction, have recently been so forceful, rapid and profound that the entire international community is still examining their import, and particularly their impact on the very future of international relations.

While it is true that that phenomenon can be broadly explained by the explosion of the contradictions born of the disappointed hopes and accumulated frustrations of many peoples over many years, it is nevertheless true that we are truly confronting a changing world, a world radically different from the one that determined the equilibrium of forces on which our Organization rests today, a world whose evolution, owing to its momentum, we cannot yet gauge with any precision.

And yet we must try to harmonize the state of the world today with the development of new international social factors in order to avoid aggravating the imbalance that multilateralism has not managed to redress.

(Mr. Gomina-Pampali, Central African Republic)

That is the line of thought the delegation of the Central African Republic would like to share with the Assembly, to which I am first in duty bound to transmit the best wishes of His Excellency General André Kolingba, President of the Republic and Head of State, for the success of its work.

I am also pleased to extend to Mr. Shihabi the warmest congratulations of the delegation of the Central African Republic on his election to the presidency of this session. His international know-how in this changing world promises a successful outcome for these deliberations, and he can be assured of our complete cooperation.

The competence and spirit of compromise with which his predecessor, Mr. Guido de Marco, conducted the work of the last session deserves the appreciation of the delegation of the Central African Republic.

The Government of the Central African Republic would also like, as his term draws to a close, to assure our Secretary-General, His Excellency Javier Perez de Cuellar, of its great gratitude for the determination with which he helped to restore to the United Nations its credibility, prestige and authority, attributes so essential today to the action it is undertaking to ensure that conditions in the world will be in keeping with the principles of the Charter.

The admission of new Members to our midst, the highest manifestation of the realization of the aspirations of their peoples, is a striking stage in the efforts made by the Secretary-General to endow the Organization with a universal character.

The delegation of the Central African Republic is therefore happy to extend its most heartfelt congratulations to the Republic of Korea and the

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Democratic People's Republic of Korea, with which my country enjoys cordial relations of friendship, which we hope will be strengthened by cooperation within the framework of the United Nations.

The international social realities of today's world demand an even greater affirmation of our will to set for them a course that will be in harmony with the ideals and principles of the Organization. For where exactly do we stand? The conditions that have led to the advent of this nascent new world order are, to be sure, the result of the dynamism of international relations that has brought about the normalization of relations between the two super-Powers on the basis of the redefinition of the doctrine of collective security upon which they are engaged.

We have good reason to be pleased that the outcome has been this positive trend, which has resulted in greater compromise on all international questions, beginning with those relating to international peace and security.

The evolution of the situation in those regions of the world that have been a source of concern to the international community is also significant in this respect. Whether in Cambodia, in Western Sahara, in Afghanistan, in southern Africa or in the Korean peninsula, United Nations action, supported by the real political will of the parties involved, has made it possible to come up with or at least to initiate a solution in line with this trend towards compromise.

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The delegation of the Central African Republic would also like to see that same spirit define the settlement of questions linked to the rise of nationalism throughout the world, as in Eastern Europe.

But the indivisibility of peace must not prevent certain regions whose peoples rightly aspire to a life in peace from benefiting from the current trends.

First, there is the Middle East, where everything must be done to achieve a just and lasting settlement fully guaranteeing the national rights of the Palestinian people and Israel's legal right to exist. My delegation considers that the possible convening, in the near future, of a conference on peace in the Middle East will provide an opportunity to formulate such a settlement.

Then there is South Africa, where the Pretoria government's desire to enact reforms has placed the national debate in a new light. We should encourage the continuation of ongoing efforts to transform South Africa into a truly democratic society boasting equal rights and completely rid of apartheid.

Such developments, made possible by the new climate in international relations, might have been extended also to other spheres of cooperation needed for balance in a changing world. But that has not happened, as witness the strictly limited cooperation among States in so fundamental an area as development. It is precisely there that we can see the gap between the aspirations of the majority of the world's peoples and the international community's response to those aspirations.

In the view of my delegation, that response must be modified by integrating the concept of development with that of security: strictly

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military security, while long the goal set and pursued by States for political reasons, has now been annulled because of the disappearance of the very underpinnings of the principle - the rivalry between the two blocs.

Development as a way of providing all the world's peoples with security in all areas - security of well-being, ecological security, food security - should provide the ideal framework for the cooperation that is sadly lacking in international relations. It looks as if third-world countries - particularly those of Africa - are to remain excluded from development in the face of indifference from the developed countries.

Yet how many meetings, conferences, seminars and colloquiums have been organized everywhere, often with the assistance of the United Nations or other international institutions, to consider and attempt to resolve the situation of those countries? Though the ills have often been defined, it has never been possible to find a cure, and the situation in those countries has deteriorated over the years. Owing to the combined effects of the steady fall of commodity prices, the very heavy debt and debt-service burden, negative net financial flows and the growing protectionism of developed States, those countries will never enjoy the conditions necessary for sustained, lasting economic progress.

The recent assessment of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 confirms the limits of international action for African countries. At the same time there is a growing tendency towards the regionalization of economic activities among developed countries, which can only contribute to the marginalization of Africa.

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So what economic future can we predict for African countries which had legitimately hoped to be able, at this time of a general decrease in political tension, to use economic interdependence to find solutions to their problems? Like the Governments of other countries, the Government of the Central African Republic has defined, in agreement with international financial institutions, a new framework for development policies, at the cost of well-known sacrifices that should have aroused good will in the international community.

The round table held last April in Geneva with the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) enabled UNDP to assess the difficulties my Government continues to experience in its efforts to stabilize the economy. I take this opportunity to thank all the participants in that round table who took an interest in the situation of the Central African Republic; we hope they will be able to meet their commitments towards my country.

My Government feels that the new trend in international relations should also extend to development; if it does not, the new world order for which the international community so ardently wishes will be in vain.

There should be more sustained efforts towards a solution of the problems of the commodity market consistent with the true value of those commodities, especially since African economies depend heavily on this market.

Likewise, it is imperative to give higher priority to the search for a compromise on the question of debt and debt servicing in the mutual interest of creditors and debtors. The delegation of the Central African Republic has always called for an international conference that could achieve this, and we

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hope that the present climate in relations among States will help bring this about.

For some time there has been a trend inspired by the developed countries towards setting an additional condition for aid or any other form of assistance to African countries: the effectiveness of efforts at democratization and respect for human rights. Such an approach could have the major drawback of attaching lower priority to the interests of peoples still requiring a contribution by the international community if they are to enjoy increased well-being.

Countries such as the Central African Republic, which have already embarked on a confirmed course of democratization, would like the international community to consider this new context to support the various efforts towards deepening and spreading democracy.

It is possible to follow international social trends in order to avoid a discrepancy between world social reality and the law of the United Nations. Cooperation among States, as set out in the Charter, has allowed international relations to move in a new political direction; it must also show States the means to realize those international social realities that reflect the aspirations of the majority of the world's peoples.

World balance demands this, and the delegation of the Central African Republic, which believes in a future according with the purposes of the Charter, wants to join other Members in expressing the hope that this session will mark a new stage on the road towards effective development cooperation among States.

Mr. HOLO (Benin) (interpretation from French): Like those who have preceded me to the rostrum of the Assembly, I would like in my turn to congratulate Mr. Shihabi on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session. His brilliant election represents not only a well-deserved recognition of his many qualities, but also the esteem his country, Saudi Arabia, enjoys in the world for its devotion to the cause of international peace, security and cooperation. The delegation of Benin is convinced that, under his guidance, our work will be crowned with success.

My delegation would also like to pay a tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Guido De Marco, who led our deliberations with great competence during the forty-fifth session, which was characterized by a deepening in our common thinking on restructuring and revitalizing our Organization and by our desire to achieve consensus on the aims of the San Francisco Charter.

The Government of the Republic of Benin is grateful to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, whose tireless efforts to achieve the United Nations objectives of peace and justice have undeniably help to accelerate the political transformations under way in the world. These transformations have already been reflected in the end of the cold war, characterized by all types of rivalries at every level. Now that his second mandate is coming to an end, we convey to him our country's appreciation for the great devotion he has shown as head of our Organization.

In this tribute, I also include all those, near or far, who work with the Secretary-General. They spare no effort to ensure the smooth running of our Organization and the triumph of the noble ideals on which it is based. It is my pleasure to congratulate the Secretary-General most especially for his excellent annual report, which takes account of the prestige of the United

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Nations and is forward-looking within the context of strengthening the irreplaceable role of the United Nations on the international scene.

The universality of our Organization has been furthered by the admission of new Members again this year. We welcome the Baltic States - Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania - which have regained their sovereignty after more than 40 years of annexation. Similarly, we congratulate the two Pacific States, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. All of these States are now Members of the United Nations. We would like to assure them of our full cooperation in achieving our common ideals.

We would also like to extend words of welcome to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and to the Republic of Korea upon their admission to membership of the United Nations. We hope that, in the near future, in the like the peaceful reunifications of Yemen and Germany, we will witness that of the Korean nation, which will put an end to the long and painful night of separation and help to resolve one of the thorny problems linked to the cold war on the Asian continent.

We are also extremely pleased by the return to our midst of the Cambodian delegation headed by His Royal Highness Prince Norodom Sihanouk.

Late in the twentieth century, history is going through changes of exceptional depth and scope. My delegation would therefore like to welcome the positive and encouraging events that are strengthening international peace and security. After a terrible arms race, the United States of America and the Soviet Union have today courageously embarked upon a veritable disarmament marathon with a view to creating a safer and more stable world. The recent initiative of United States President George Bush in proposing the elimination of all land- and sea-based short-range tactical nuclear weapons - an

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initiative that was positively received by the main nuclear Powers, particularly the Soviet Union, whose President Mikhail Gorbachev has responsibly taken up the challenges of peace - is significant in that respect. In this same context we welcome the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime with the decision to adhere to the 1968 Treaty not only of two nuclear Powers - France and China - but also of non-nuclear-weapon States. We therefore expect that this Treaty will be renewed or made permanent when it expires in 1995. This would open the way to increased international cooperation for the peaceful use of atomic energy.

The era of confrontation is being replaced - slowly but surely - by that of international cooperation, and in the place of political and ideological rivalries we see the emergence and consolidation of a spirit of solidarity and a growing awareness of the necessary complementarities. Thus the major protagonists of the past, the United States and the Soviet Union, have established policies of cooperation expressed in their sustained efforts to limit weapons, in particular by the implementation of the 1987 Treaty on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty) and the signing in Moscow on 31 July 1991 of the Treaty on strategic arms reduction (START Treaty), whose aim is to spare us a nuclear conflagration.

In a regional context, I would like to mention the positive developments in the situation in El Salvador, which are due to the efforts of the Secretary-General and to the initiatives taken by the Latin American States that met recently in Mexico City to establish the foundations of true regional cooperation and economic integration. These are measures that will build

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confidence and security with a view to the irreversible return of peace to that region.

What can one say about the development of democratic movements in the world? These have been manifested, inter alia, by the political pluralism that has already enabled my country, Benin, to establish, after almost two decades of monolithic government, a legislative organ, a Chief Executive elected by direct universal sufferage, and a truly independent judiciary to protect our freedoms.

We are proud of being a part of the development of democracy, which is spreading further over the world every day, as witnessed by the failure of the attempted coup d'état against the reform policies of the Soviet President, Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev. This development enhances the moral authority of our Organization, which is rightly based on the promotion, defence and protection of fundamental human rights, including civil and political rights for the preservation of international peace and security.

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However promising the new political situation prevailing in the world today may seem, we cannot forget, amid the euphoria of the real attainments of democracy, freedom and international cooperation, that, unfortunately, unacceptable disequilibrium, unbearable injustice and dangerous hotbeds of tension still exist on our planet. In other words, international peace and security remain fragile.

In South Africa, we are witnessing the collapse of the pillars of apartheid - a system that, in its very essence, is harmful to the human dimension of security. We can only say how pleased we are about this. However, there is every reason to be concerned about the persistence of violence - it is time to put an end to this, once and for all - and about the absence of real progress in the preparation of a democratic and non-racial constitution based on the principle of one man, one vote. We therefore appeal to all the peoples of the world to reaffirm their determination to harness their efforts to assist the people of South Africa to regain its complete freedom as soon as possible.

That is why the international community in general and Africa in particular must remain vigilant and must maintain existing measures against South Africa, in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its sixteenth special session, devoted to apartheid and its harmful consequences in southern Africa, until it has been very clearly demonstrated that the present course is irreversible. It would be illusory to believe that the removal of the sanctions imposed on South Africa could lead to a rapid change in the system of government by the white minority.

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Furthermore, we encourage the South African opposition to unite for the purpose of accelerating this evolution, which will make it possible for South Africa to contribute to securing the peace and progress to which the peoples of southern Africa aspire. Those peoples have suffered too long from terror and destruction.

In that respect, the cessation of internal hostilities in Angola, following the signing of a cease-fire agreement on 31 May 1991, is an encouraging sign of an end to more than 15 years of civil war, which has ruined the country. We hope that the same will prove to be true with regard to Mozambique. We hope also that the peoples of these two countries will be enabled to enjoy the peace that is so essential to national reconstruction and well-being.

Benin is pleased at the agreement that has been achieved between independent Namibia and South Africa on the question of Walvis Bay and the neighbouring islands, in accordance with the spirit of Security Council resolution 432 (1978). The settlement of this important question will make it possible to consolidate Namibia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and to create the conditions for the economic integration of a prosperous southern Africa.

Elsewhere in Africa, certain fraternal countries have not been spared civil wars born of ethnic conflicts, social and political injustice and violations of human rights. It is our duty to continue relentlessly to recommend to those involved that they resort to the virtues of dialogue to resolve their internal disputes.

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In this respect, the international community must not spare any effort in encouraging regional initiatives, such as those of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) regarding Ethiopia and Somalia which supported the efforts undertaken by President Hassan Gouled Aptidon of Djibouti to bring peace back to the Horn of Africa, or those of the Economic Community of West African States with respect to Liberia, taken up recently in Yamoussokro at the second meeting of the so-called Ad Hoc Committee of Five under the auspices of President Houphouet-Boigny. Benin is pleased at the efforts that have begun to be deployed by the Senegalese and Mauritanian authorities to restore relations of cooperation and good-neighbourliness between the two countries. These relations have deteriorated since August 1989.

In the north of the continent, the Governments and peoples of the Maghreb have been aspiring to more cooperation, and the efforts they have been making along these lines must be encouraged for the sake of the development of the Arab Maghreb Union.

If there remains a significant obstacle to realization of this desire, it is the question of Western Sahara, where the praiseworthy efforts of our Secretary-General have not yet led to peace, despite the recent cease-fire. However, my delegation has no doubt that the parties involved will cooperate with the Secretary-General in the context of implementation of the settlement plan endorsed in Security Council resolution 658 (1990), which provides for a self-determination referendum under the auspices of the United Nations and the OAU. My country is honoured to be one of those that have participated directly in the field in this peace mission set up under Security Council resolution 690 (1991).

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Since our last session the situation in the Middle East has not improved. The international community was heartsore at the war between Iraq and the coalition of States that, quite rightly, cooperated with Kuwait. That war - caused by Iraq's aggression against the sovereignty of Kuwait - ended with victory for the coalition, but without solution of the basic problems that inflame the region. Not only has Iraq, which invaded Kuwait - now liberated - been destroyed; Kuwait too is in ruins. This distressing spectacle faces mankind with serious moral problems. Must we embark on massive destruction of the heritage of all mankind before we begin to reconstruct, at great expense?

The Republic of Benin has always respected the principles of the Charter, and we condemn any use of force to settle disputes between States. We feel that mankind will be running real risks if, as in the past, it drags its feet with regard to the question of a comprehensive and urgent resolution of the question of the Middle East. As in the case of the war against Iraq, the question of the conflict between Israel and its neighbouring Arab States, the question of Palestine, which has not yet been settled; and the question of Lebanon, where foreign troops are still present, and in respect of which one cannot speak of true national reconciliation, still pose a threat to international peace and security.

There is thus an urgent need for specific and concerted measures taking into account, in particular, the rights of all the States in the region, including Israel, as well as the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people, in order that a comprehensive, just and lasting peace may be achieved. In our view, only a sincere and frank dialogue between all the parties involved will make possible a just and final solution to the

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Israeli-Palestinian problem. From that standpoint, my country hopes that the consultations undertaken by the United States authorities will succeed in leading to the convening of a regional conference. We welcome the support shown by the Palestine National Council, at its recent meeting in Algiers, for the United States initiative.

In Europe, the reunification of the island of Cyprus is also an urgent task whose completion is in the interests of peace and security, which are threatened by nationality conflicts such as that in Yugoslavia.

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Benin is concerned with the tension which prevails in that country, whose ideals of non-alignment we share. Thus, we urge mutual understanding among all the components of that Federation, so that peace and security may be restored through negotiation.

In Asia, following the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan, it is essential that the various parties embark on negotiations with a view to bringing about a restoration of national unity and peace.

We congratulate Cambodia, which has been ravaged by a dozen years of civil war, on the establishment of a cease-fire. But the various factions must still overcome the internal controversies which impede the implementation of Security Council resolution 668 (1990), aimed at organizing free and fair elections under the auspices of the United Nations.

Now that the world seems to be embarked on an irreversible course to end the policy of blocs, where the obsession with military security is no longer appropriate, prospects seem to be opening up for arms limitations. The final objective is general and complete disarmament which will release substantial resources for the development of the poorest countries of our planet.

In other words, our Organization will have to take up additional challenges arising from the continuous deterioration of the international socio-economic situation which poses another threat to international peace and security.

Indeed, poverty, want, famine, malnutrition, sickness, drug abuse, the deterioration of the environment kill more people in a few days than did the Hiroshima bomb. Are these ills not the daily lot of a major portion of the peoples of this world? And nowhere is the situation as serious as in Africa, as the Secretary-General emphasized in his annual report.

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The international community is suffering from unacceptable ills at the end of the twentieth century, despite all the progress achieved by mankind. Despite the immense resources of the modern world and the extraordinary scientific and technological progress, people on our planet still find it difficult to exist or even to survive.

The economic situation in the developing countries has barely improved, despite attempts to remedy it. There is no doubt that this is the most serious threat to international peace and security in a constantly changing world where the means of communication enable the poor to observe the insolent wealth of the rich.

An international order which allows more than half the population of the planet to die of hunger and ignorance is doomed to failure.

The Declaration adopted at the the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations devoted to international economic cooperation, held in April-May of 1990, did not fail to sound its traditional alarm. It was recognized by all that the solution lies in the adoption of national policies to liberalize trade so as to respond more flexibly to the evolution of the economy.

Furthermore, the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Paris in September 1990, recommended to the international community in its final Declaration that greater attention be focused on these countries in view of their specific problems.

In this respect, we would recall that during that meeting the President of the French Republic, Mr. François Mitterand, reiterated his appeal in favour of development and a more just and equitable world order.

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The profound changes under way will have failed to achieve their essential objectives if they do not take into account and settle the question which has become primordial, namely, the organization of planetary solidarity; in other words, if they do no tackle the fundamental problems of North-South relations, and in particular those linked to African debt, the impoverishment of our continent, and the accompanying train of want, sickness and unemployment. In effect, the situation in Africa, where most of the least developed countries are to be found, is hardly encouraging.

Almost all African countries have programmes for the restructuring of their economies in accordance with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, the positive effects of which are still to be seen.

Faced with the uncertain future of all these countries, at their last summit meeting the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), recognized the need for stopgap measures by encouraging regional economic integration to be achieved in the next three decades, and to take shape in the African Economic Community.

But in the short term, Africa will continue as in the past to make appeals to its creditors to undertake to do more to help find a solution to the painful debt problem and thereby help complete its internal efforts to achieve development.

We commend deservedly the efforts undertaken by some States to arrange a partial rescheduling or cancellation of certain debts in third-world countries in general, and of those in Africa in particular, and I appeal to other States to do the same in the interests of all. For, if nothing is done today to guarantee for our youth a future that is humanely acceptable, the difficult constraints and the many privations imposed by the economic adjustments which

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are being made all over the continent, will most definitely lead to social problems and political instability that no coercive measure will be able to contain for long.

To rescue Africa from its desperate economic situation, rapid action on the part of the international community is indispensable.

Indeed, it is clear that after the failures of the years which followed independence and the impasse into which the militarist-socialist-Marxist revolutions of the continent have led, the era of democracy runs the risk of leading our States - if nothing specific and substantial is done in the next five years - into chaos. This is hardly something we would like to happen.

That is why the international community, in particular the developed countries, must undertake to help Africa put into effect the proposals of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole entrusted with the examination and final evaluation of the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 (UNPAAERD), which was held here at the United Nations Headquarters from 3 to 14 September 1991.

In this context, I appeal to all delegations to adopt the two documents submitted for their attention by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole under item 4 of the agenda of the current session of the General Assembly.

The adoption by consensus of these two documents will make it possible to implement proposals to reverse the trend towards the decline and the increasing impoverishment of the African States and to raise the very low standard of living of the rural populations, who are the principal victims of all these political and economic failures of the continent since independence.

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The future of mankind depends, too, on a sound management of the environment and a lasting development strategy within the context of the initiative taken by the General Assembly when it adopted resolution 44/228 on the convening in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 1 to 12 June 1992 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the third session of whose Preparatory Committee was held in Geneva from 12 August to 4 September 1991.

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We sincerely hope that our Heads of State and Government will examine with all due care the problems of protecting the environment and the closely linked problems of harmonious and lasting development, and that their analyses and decisions will be based on the valuable documents being prepared by our experts in the various negotiating committees and working groups.

Confident, therefore, that the Rio Conference in 1992 will be crowned with success, I should like to anticipate events by saying that we must collectively and individually commit ourselves, especially the most developed and wealthiest among us, to implementing the decisions taken. They will cover financial mechanisms; the transfer of new, clean technology; and legal and institutional machinery. The consensus that will be achieved both by the Preparatory Committee, which will complete its work in March and April 1992, and the Conference itself in June 1992 will not mean the triumph of the ideas of a group of States or of one hemisphere over another, but will be the result of a common political will to achieve a common dream for a common cause without frontiers: Planet Earth.

While awaiting the deliberations in Rio next June and the implementation of the decisions taken there, Benin, like some other countries, is periodically suffering natural disasters which in a few hours destroy the development efforts made with a great deal of determination and enthusiasm. This year again, for the fourth time in 10 years, Benin was the victim of floods in its southern region following downpours lasting from May to July. Those floods caused loss of human life and of millions of hectares of crops as well as displacements of people and the destruction of dwellings.

I take this opportunity to express our thanks once again to all those who responded to the appeal of Benin's Head of State, President Nicephore Soglo,

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and of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO) by providing us with various types of emergency aid. We express our gratitude to them and sincerely hope that the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction will make it possible to carry out reconstruction projects to deal with disasters that have already occurred as well as to take measures to lessen the effects of future disasters.

In addition, aware that man remains the subject and the author of all processes of transforming society, and that there can be no real, lasting progress without freedom, Benin has embarked on a democratic process, and, as I have already said, has been able to complete successfully its first elections.

I invite the industrialized countries and international organizations to provide massive aid to the emerging democracies in the countries of the South, in a spirit of solidarity similar to that which they have shown with regard to the countries of Eastern Europe. That is the only way to enable those democracies to achieve quickly the material conditions necessary to consolidate themselves and gradually to get out of the economic morass they find themselves in and escape its consequences.

Similarly, at the political level, the condemnation of coups d'états and support for democratic regimes, such as that in Haiti, must occur spontaneously and immediately, as happened with regard to the coup d'état against President Gorbachev. Therefore, my Government firmly supports all the efforts to restore to power President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the constitutionally elected President of Haiti. Convinced that power comes from the ballot box, and not from brute force, Benin warmly welcomes the strong resolution unanimously adopted by leaders of the Organization of American

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States (OAS) on 30 September this year in Washington, and hopes that the statements made in the Security Council on 3 October and in various capitals of the world will be translated into concrete deeds. The Haitian people chose democracy in a sovereign act. The international community, which gave its help to that end, must help them to restore and consolidate democracy.

Finally, the nascent democracies in Africa and elsewhere cannot grow stronger without building true States of law, where respect for human rights and the furtherance and defence of human rights and the rights of peoples are not empty words but realities, translated into deeds in everyday life.

To that end, my country is already taking useful steps to ensure worthwhile participation in the World Conference on Human Rights, to be held at a high level in 1993.

We very much hope that the debates at the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly will allow us to consolidate the gains made in maintaining international peace and security. They strengthen our hope that the rapprochement between the major Powers will continue to bring positive effects in world events, so that satisfactory solutions can be found to existing conflicts. We also hope that the external debt burden of the developing countries will be lessened and that the assistance given by wealthy countries to the less fortunate countries will be increased, making it possible to implement the social and economic projects vital for their existence.

As the Assembly will have noted, the current state of the world has made it necessary for me to emphasize certain points. In doing so, I wanted to express and share the hopes of a people which has resolutely set out on the difficult but very healthy path of freedom, in order to overcome fear, poverty and uncertainty about the future through its own genius, but not losing sight

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of the fact that international cooperation and solidarity are also essential to realize its destiny.

Mr. NGARUKIYINTWALI (Rwanda) (interpretation from French): It is a great honour for me and the entire Rwandese delegation to convey to the President our warm congratulations on his election to preside over the work of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session. His election is recognition by the international community of his outstanding personal qualities and his ability as a seasoned diplomat. It is also, through him, a tribute to his country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which has always striven to strengthen ties of friendship and cooperation between all peace-loving and justice-loving countries.

We also congratulate the other officers of the General Assembly elected to direct the work of this session.

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The Rwandese delegation at this session of the General Assembly wishes to assure the President that it stands fully prepared to make its contribution to the success of the Assembly's work.

Our appreciation is also addressed to his predecessor, Mr. Guido de Marco, who guided the work of the forty-fifth session with wisdom and competence, the results of which were unanimously lauded.

Permit me also to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, who has for ten years served and directed our Organization with competence, wisdom and dedication in discharging the extremely burdensome and complex responsibilities conferred upon him. The many different successes scored bear testimony to his exceptional qualities and have redounded to the esteem and credit of our Organization. The Rwandese Republic will always remember him as a man who devoted himself heart and soul to the cause of peace, justice, solidarity and the well-being of peoples. He may be assured of our profound gratitude.

I should also like to add my voice to that of those who have already offered the new Members a heartfelt welcome to the family of the United Nations, namely, the two Koreas; the three Baltic Republics: Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia; the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands. They may be assured of our sincere felicitations and our encouragement in working for the blossoming of the noble ideals and, more particularly, contributing to the consolidation of much better international relations of solidarity.

In keeping with well-established tradition, the annual convening of the General Assembly is intended to provide an opportunity to take stock of a year's activity by the United Nations, with a view, especially, to preparing

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for the future on the basis of lessons learned, experience gained and results achieved. It also provides a special opportunity for all Member States to set forth, publicly and solemnly, their positions with regard to the problems currently of concern to the international community. It is an opportunity also to voice the hopes they have for the future, hopes the realization of which will depend on the mobilization and contribution of all peoples in the context of more active solidarity above and beyond pious hopes and mere declarations of intent.

It is against this backdrop and notwithstanding the rather positive turn of events in international political relations that Rwanda continues to be gravely concerned over the international economic situation. That situation hardly gives any grounds for optimism, mindful as we are of the worsening of the structural crisis in the world economy that is broadening the gap between the industrialized and the developing countries.

Before putting forth Rwanda's position on the major problems of international politics in terms of political relations and economic issues, the Rwandese delegation would like first of all to draw the attention of all delegations gathered here for the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly to the gravity of the state of war that my country, Rwanda, has been living through ever since 1 October 1990, when it was attacked by armed elements from Uganda.

Indeed, since 1 October 1990 the assailants - including a number of former Rwandese refugees hired by and serving in Uganda's regular army, the "National Resistance Army" (NRA), and calling itself the Rwandese Patriotic Front, or FPR-INKOYANYI - invaded Rwanda before being thrown out on

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30 October 1990 and since then it has been organizing armed attacks against the Rwandese population in areas bordering on Uganda.

The first attempt at an explanation advanced by the aggressors to justify the armed invasion of Rwanda was their allegation that the Rwandese Government had refused to agree to the return of Rwandese who had fled their country at the end of the 1950s in connection with the struggle of the Rwandese people against a feudal-monarchical regime and in favour of the establishment of republican institutions in the country.

It should be recalled that this phenomenon of Rwandese refugees grew out of the social revolution of 1959, which brought the overthrow of the feudal regime in favour of republican democracy. The supporters of feudal monarchy rejected the new democratic system and preferred exile with their partisans in neighbouring countries, from where they have regularly launched armed attacks against the newly-constituted Republic of Rwanda between the years 1963 and 1968.

However, Rwanda has always sought a definitive solution to the problem of its refugees, one based on national legislation and international conventions to which my country is party. It is in this spirit that voluntary repatriation, at the specific request of individual refugees, has been carried out on a continuing basis.

Moreover, it is important to stress that the war that has been going on in Rwanda since 1 October 1990 began at a time when our country was at an advanced stage of negotiations with Uganda with a view to a definitive settlement of the problem of the Rwandese refugees living in Uganda. On the basis of the outcome of those negotiations with Uganda, Rwanda had envisaged

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ways and means of also settling the problem of Rwandese refugees living in other neighbouring countries and elsewhere in the world.

Only two months prior to the invasion of Rwanda, the joint Rwanda-Uganda Ministerial Committee - which had been established in 1988 to work out a definitive settlement of the problem of the Rwandese refugees in Uganda - had just held its third meeting in Kigali, from 27 to 30 July 1990, with the participation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Organization of African Unity. On that occasion, the Rwandese and Ugandan Governments had just reached agreement to the effect that under the auspices of the High Commissioner for Refugees a survey was to be conducted among the refugees themselves to ascertain their wishes concerning the three options proposed to them, namely, voluntary repatriation to Rwanda, a definitive settlement in Uganda with naturalization, or a third option of their choosing.

It is appropriate also to recall that it had been decided that the Rwanda-Uganda Ministerial Committee, working in concert with the High Commissioner for Refugees, was to meet again in January 1991 to finalize and endorse the solutions arrived at on the basis of the outcome of the survey, and that in the meantime a group of refugees was to visit Rwanda to see for themselves the social and political situation in the country and to report their impressions to the other refugees so that the latter could make a fully informed decision on the matter.

Unfortunately, that visit, which was to have taken place from the end of September to mid-October 1990, was cancelled by one side and instead Uganda began on 1 October 1990 to carry out an armed invasion against Rwanda.

Ever since the onset of the armed conflict thus imposed upon it, Rwanda, aided by friendly countries, in particular countries of our subregion,

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launched a number of political and diplomatic initiatives aimed at restoring peace in the country and in the region.

Against this background the summit meetings held at Mwanza in Tanzania and at Gbadolite in Zaire stressed respect for the cease-fire between the belligerents, the opening of a dialogue between the parties to the conflict, and efforts to find a definitive solution to the problem of the Rwandese refugees.

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It was precisely for the purpose of studying ways and means of finding a definitive solution to the problem of Rwandese refugees that a regional conference was held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, on 19 February 1991, bringing together the Heads of State or Government of the region. On that occasion the Government of Rwanda, while very much deploring the fact that the war that had been imposed on it since 1 October 1990 had brutally cut short the process of finding solutions to resolve definitively the problem of its refugees, once again expressed its conviction that the voluntary repatriation of all Rwandese refugees was a legitimate right and a factor that would promote peace and reconciliation.

Rwanda consequently reaffirmed its readiness to take the necessary steps to facilitate the smooth return of those refugees wishing to return and to ensure their reintegration into the various facets of national life, but in this connection asked for the indispensable support of the international community.

In conformity with the decisions taken at that Dar es Salaam conference, the Organization of African Unity and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees are now in the process of working out, in cooperation with the countries concerned, a plan of action for finding a lasting solution to the problem of Rwandese refugees, a plan which will be submitted to a pledging conference to be held at the beginning of next year. The Government of Rwanda, for its part, is in the process of taking specific action to prepare for the return of Rwandese refugees that opt for repatriation. A law guaranteeing a general amnesty for Rwandese refugees will shortly be adopted.

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Nevertheless, the state of war under which Rwanda has been living for a year now has proved that the quest for a definitive solution of the problem of Rwandese refugees was not really what concerned those that had committed the aggression against Rwanda. Indeed, as the Head of State of Rwanda stressed at the twenty-seventh summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity, held at Abuja last June, the Rwandese Patriotic Front, as soon as it realized that the pretext of the refugee problem advanced to "legitimize" before the world the invasion of Rwanda no longer carried weight with African and international public opinion, changed the direction of the discussion and called the invasion the defence of the ideal of democracy, endeavouring to make people believe that what it was doing was prompted by its determination to establish democracy in Rwanda.

The fact is that since January 1989 the Rwandese Government had been proposing that there be a political renewal, and this idea took tangible shape subsequently, notably through the adoption on 10 June 1991 of a new Constitution legitimizing political pluralism as well as effectively establishing political parties, which are already operating and irreversibly committed to strengthening the democratic process.

In view of the fact that virtually all the pretexts put forward for launching the war cannot be justified, it is difficult to understand the rationale that is prompting those who committed the aggression against Rwanda to continue the hostilities, to reject the cease-fire recommended by the various summit meetings of Heads of State held at the subregional level and to refuse to lay down their arms and engage in dialogue under the auspices of the mediator accepted by both parties to the conflict.

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Rwanda, profoundly convinced that the ending of hostilities is the essential condition for the settlement of this conflict, which has now lasted for a year, has never ruled out political negotiations with the aggressors. However, it has always stressed that such negotiations are possible only if the guns are silenced and the cease-fire agreement signed between the belligerents on 29 March 1991 is complied with.

It is therefore the obstinate position taken by the Rwandese Patriotic Front in continuing hostilities that has held up progress towards dialogue. The Head of State of Rwanda made clear Uganda's share of responsibility in this regard when at the last summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity, held at Abuja - after having demonstrated that those attacking Rwanda had no bases within Rwanda itself but were operating from Uganda, where they were being sheltered and were receiving all the necessary logistical support - he asked the Organization of African Unity to enjoin Uganda to disarm the aggressors on its territory.

A positive circumstance to be noted is that the summit meeting of Heads of State held in Gbado-Lite, Zaire, on 7 September 1991, once again stressed the need to abide by an immediate and complete cease-fire and recommended that the parties to the conflict enter quickly into a dialogue. The first round of that dialogue was held from 15 to 17 September 1991 in Gbado-Lite, under the auspices of the mediator, the Head of State of Zaire, Marshal Mobutu Sese Seko.

But we have found, to our great regret, that the Rwandese Patriotic Front, counting on the support of the Ugandan Army in continuing the war, has been engaging in stalling manoeuvres to boycott that dialogue and prevent it from moving forward. Surely it is through dialogue that positions can be

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reconciled. The Government of Rwanda, for its part, is profoundly committed to such dialogue and remains ready to resume it without delay and without preconditions. It is the strong desire of the Rwandese Government that this dialogue swiftly bring about results conducive to ending the conflict, thus creating a propitious climate of peace and security within Rwanda as well as throughout the region, and at the same time facilitating the return to Rwanda of those refugees wishing to return. Rwanda is counting very much on the support of the international community, of all the countries Members of the United Nations represented at this forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, as we seek to make that hope a reality.

The safeguarding of international peace and security and the constant building of ties of friendship and cooperation among nations remain the basic objectives of our actions as mankind continues its long march towards the realization of its most profound aspiration - that is, the flourishing of international concord, of freedom and of the progress of peoples everywhere.

Rwanda wishes once again to affirm its solemn commitment to the triumph of the cause of peace and it pays a profound tribute to the United Nations for the invaluable successes it has achieved since its inception. We take this opportunity to express our hopes for a further strengthening of the bonds of fraternity and solidarity among peoples, so that we can bring to an end the crisis persisting in the world, particularly in the southern hemisphere, including Africa, a crisis that is both economic and political.

Notwithstanding the generally successful record and tireless efforts of the United Nations since the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the international community today is still confronting certain conflicts which

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cast a pall over the international political scene. The world is still torn apart by bloody tensions and deadly conflicts arising out of anachronistic situations of intolerance, colonization, oppression and racism. Naked violence holds sway wherever the sovereignty of peoples and the integrity of States are flouted, wherever the dignity and the fundamental rights of people are disregarded or trampled underfoot.

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As to the major issue of fundamental human rights and the dignity of the human person, the Government of Rwanda welcomes the step taken since the liberation of Mr. Nelson Mandela, President of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), on 11 February 1990, in the process set in motion in South Africa with a view to eliminating the system of apartheid.

The removal, officially, of that system on 30 June 1991, after the three juridical pillars of apartheid had been eliminated - namely, the Land Acts, the Group Areas Act and the Population Regulation Act, as well as the agreement reached on 1 July 1991 between the South African Government and the ANC concerning the freeing of political prisoners - opened a new chapter in interracial relations in South Africa.

And yet, we deplore the fact that acts of violence and massacres still persist, especially in the black townships, and that the South African Government, which is responsible for maintaining law and order, has not managed to prevent them. We also denounce the secret financing of such acts by the South African Government.

Thus, while we note with satisfaction certain positive changes in South Africa, the Government of Rwanda believes that a great deal still remains to be done in the process of dismantling apartheid. It lauds the efforts made by the President of South Africa, Mr. De Klerk, and the President of the ANC, Mr. Nelson Mandela, and encourages the South African Government to pursue negotiations with the representatives of the other South African racial communities, including the ANC, to speed the day of the actual eradication of apartheid, once and for all, in that part of our continent.

As to Angola, my Government welcomes the Peace Agreement signed in Lisbon on 31 May 1991 between the Government of Angola and UNITA. This agreement

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constitutes a major step towards restoring peace, security and stability to Angola. The international community is called upon to support the efforts that are being made, at the bilateral and multilateral levels, to give tangible expression to the goals embodied in that agreement in the interests of international peace and security.

As to Namibia, it is our view that the international community must support the negotiations set in motion between Namibia and South Africa to reintegrate Walvis Bay and the offshore islands, into Namibia, in keeping with Security Council resolution 432 (1978).

The Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, meeting at Abuja, Nigeria, from 4 to 6 June 1991, were of the opinion that the problem of Walvis Bay and of the offshore Namibian islands was not a border dispute but rather an issue involving decolonization, an issue which must be resolved fairly and definitively as quickly as possible.

Rwanda also reaffirms its support for the Mozambican people and is pleased at the efforts made by the Government of Mozambique and RENAMO to find a peaceful settlement of the conflict, which has been rending that country asunder for several years now.

Notwithstanding the significant progress made at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the problem of Western Sahara still remains a concern for the international community.

In fact, at the end of April 1991, the Security Council adopted an overall plan which took effect on 17 May 1991, entrusting the United Nations with the responsibility for organizing and monitoring a referendum on self-determination in Western Sahara next year to determine whether the people want to be independent, as POLISARIO wishes, or whether they prefer to become

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integrated into Morocco. Rwanda therefore welcomes the positive turn of events there and encourages the parties concerned fully to cooperate with the United Nations in finding a definitive solution to that conflict.

Elsewhere in Africa, the Government of Rwanda hopes for an end to the civil war in Ethiopia and Somalia and encourages the peoples and governments of those countries to spare no efforts to ensure peace, justice and security in that part of Africa.

As to the civil war in Liberia, Rwanda remains convinced that only through dialogue can peace be restored in that country, together with security in the region. Hence we would very much like to see the parties to the conflict, supported by the countries in the region, continue the consultations with a view to restoring peace and unity to the Liberian people.

Rwanda firmly believes in the value of dialogue in finding a peaceful settlement to disputes and in the principle of non-resort to force, and in consonance with international ethics and modern international law, it strongly condemns terrorism and aggression.

In international forums Rwanda has invariably voiced its dedication and commitment to peace and political dialogue and has always striven to translate them into action on the subregional, regional and international levels. Thus, like other countries that espouse peace and freedom, we heaved a sigh of relief when the cease-fire agreement was signed in the Gulf region on 28 February 1991 after Kuwait had been liberated by the anti-Iraqi Coalition forces created under United Nations auspices to free Kuwait from the invasion and Iraqi occupation that had gone on since 2 August 1990.

As it did throughout the Gulf crisis, Rwanda supports the measures and efforts undertaken by the international community under the aegis of the

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United nations to restore law, justice, peace and security in that part of the globe.

The situation in the Middle East continues to be very alarming and the Israeli-Arab conflict - a conflict which is being exacerbated by the Palestinian problem - continues to give rise to acute disquiet in the international community which is, after all, agreed that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution be found to this problem.

Thus the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session once again invited the Security Council to examine the steps necessary for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

The Rwandan Government welcomes the results that have already been achieved, through the efforts of the Secretary of State of the United States of America, Mr. James Baker, and the Secretary-General of the United Nations as well as those of the countries of the region, to convince the parties concerned, including Israel and the PLO, of the need to hold an international peace conference on the Middle East to put an end to this conflict, which has been with us since 1947.

The international community is thus duty-bound to support all efforts exerted at the bilateral and international levels to facilitate the holding and success of this conference, which is scheduled to be held in October 1991.

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With respect to the situation in Cambodia, we express our satisfaction at, and our total support for, the cease-fire agreement signed on 25 June 1991 between the Cambodian Government and the anti-government Cambodian coalition, as well as the results of the election of 18 July 1991, which brought Prince Norodom Sihanouk to the presidency of the Supreme National Council, the provisional body which is to hold power in Phnom Penh starting this coming November until the holding of general elections to be organized and supervised by the United Nations. Rwanda supports the efforts of the United Nations and the other concerned parties to resolve this conflict once and for all to the benefit of international peace and security.

Rwanda also continues to encourage all efforts aimed at the peaceful and independent reunification of the Korean nation and hopes that the admission of the two Korean States to the great family of the United Nations will contribute to making a reality of that legitimate aspiration of the Korean people.

Elsewhere in the world, we note with optimism and support the noble initiatives for dialogue and negotiations for peace and reconciliation already under way in Latin America, notably within the framework of the Contadora Group. We believe that the outcome of the Mexico Summit is a significant contribution towards consolidating peace and security in the region.

The international economy is still in crisis - a crisis which for the third-world countries increasingly poses a threat to their very survival and runs the the risk of negating the laborious efforts at development that have already been undertaken. The crisis is essentially structural in nature because it involves machinery which currently governs international economic relations, with the increasingly negative impact inherent in the instability

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of financial markets, the continued deterioration in the terms of trade, the stagnation in commodity markets, and indebtedness.

The African continent is still experiencing tragic problems of underdevelopment; economic projects for the majority of countries in the least developed category are grim, especially for those countries, like Rwanda, which are faced with various structural handicaps that are exacerbated by the current economic situation. These are the most disadvantaged countries of the world; they are witnessing a worsening of the living conditions of their peoples, unable to do anything about the scourges of poverty, hunger, malnutrition and ignorance.

Rwanda, one of the very seriously affected victims of the persistent international economic crisis, deplores this situation and once again appeals to the international community to display greater solidarity and more effective understanding, with a view to overcoming the constraints and development problems.

The problem of indebtedness is of acute concern to the developing countries, particularly the least developed among them. As so rightly recalled by the Summit Conference of the Heads of State or Government of the Organization of African Unity held in Abuja from 4 to 6 June 1991, the unprecedented drop in prices for the commodities sold by African countries which has led to worsening terms of trade, the adoption of increasingly protectionist measures and restrictive trade practices on the markets of the industrialized countries aimed against exports from Africa - those are some of the chief external causes that have led to our continent's indebtedness.

Rwanda regrets that the need to convene an international conference on Africa's external debt does not yet enjoy consensus between the industrialized countries and the developing countries, notably within the United Nations,

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where, none the less, a broad consensus is emerging on the desirability of developing international economic cooperation on the external debt. While we welcome the decision adopted at the Summit Conference of the seven major industrialized countries held in London on 18 July 1991 to cancel between 50 per cent and 80 per cent of the official debt incurred by the least developed countries, we none the less continue to feel that a conference on Africa's external debt should be convened; such a conference could provide an appropriate framework in the search for an urgent solution to this serious problem that is mortgaging Africa's economic development.

In this connection, we hail Japan's initiative to host the International Conference on Africa's Development, scheduled for 1993, with the participation of the African Heads of State. The Republic of Rwanda pays a ringing tribute to the people and the Government of Japan for this historic initiative of great benefit to the African continent.

With respect to the international trade situation, Rwanda continues to believe that, in order for the international trade system to be acceptable, it must provide for the elimination of all kinds of trade barriers and for the integration in the system of small countries that are now marginalized, including African countries. Also, in order for the system to be viable, it must be profitable to all trade partners.

Therefore, it is important for all participants in the Uruguay Round negotiations to pay special attention to the problems and concerns of the African countries. We stress that all the parties to the negotiations should take part on an equal footing so that the negotiations' outcome will be fair and acceptable to all.

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Rwanda welcomes the establishment by the Summit Conference of the Heads of State or Government of the Organization of African Unity, held in Abuja from 4 to 6 June 1991, of the African Economic Community, one of whose goals is to promote Africa's economic, social and cultural development and the integration of its economies, with a view to enhancing economic self-sufficiency and promoting endogenous and self-sustaining development.

We call upon the international community, and especially the most industrialized countries and the international financial institutions, to support this initiative in every way and to help the nascent African Economic Community attain its noble goals.

We call for just and appropriate measures to support the effort at revitalization undertaken by our countries at considerable sacrifice, and for better integrated and more adaptable solutions to be developed with the full cooperation of all parties, in order to ensure that mankind will enjoy a future of fairness, balance and harmony.

It is in this context that Rwanda wishes once again from this rostrum to express its sincere thanks to all countries and international organizations which, on a bilateral basis or at the multilateral level, are providing the additional support it needs for its development and, in particular, for its structural adjustment programme, which has been in the process of implementation since November last year.

Ecological problems are now of world concern. But there are still differences of view with respect to the causes and responsibilities linked to the deterioration and the protection of the environment, as well as with respect to the measures to be taken in this field. Once again Africa finds itself the victim; there is drought, desertification, floods and devastation

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the result of insect infestations. My country, Rwanda, ascribes particular importance to preserving its natural patrimony and has made the protection of the environment one of the major priorities of its food self-sufficiency policy.

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Rwanda is glad that the international community is tackling the problem of the environment and is aware of the urgent need to mobilize all resources necessary to provide solutions that will guarantee the survival of our planet. There are grounds for hope that the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development scheduled for Brazil in June 1992, the preparatory work for which is continuing, will reach concerted and appropriate solutions to preserve a sound and viable environment for mankind. Rwanda is participating in this work and is making its modest contribution to ensuring its success.

The forty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly is being held in a climate of particularly favourable international relations. Rwanda welcomes the fact that the cold war, which after the Second World War divided the world into two antagonistic blocs and maintained the division of Europe, has once and for all ended thanks to the policy of perestroika and of glasnost of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. This led to the changes in Eastern Europe, especially the peaceful reunification of Germany on 3 October 1990.

We welcome the general relaxation of tensions in the world-wide political climate, which has made possible, indeed facilitated, a solution to many different local and regional conflicts across Africa, Asia and Latin America. The winds of freedom and democracy which blew across Eastern Europe, and the effects of which were quickly felt in a variety of other places around the world, especially in Africa, are a major factor in the political changes now under way.

Rwanda takes note of and appreciates the support which Western countries are giving to this democratic upsurge. It is of the view, however, that, while supporting the democratic processes thus set in train, the Western

(Mr. Ngarukiyintwali, Rwanda)

countries should do all they can to see to it that the economic development of the countries concerned becomes the strongest pillar of that democracy because, and this must be emphasized, it is an illusion to seek to build a sound democracy without promoting the socio-economic development of peoples.

My country which, in June 1991, began to establish a political system based upon a multiparty approach, seizes this opportunity to reaffirm its unbroken faith in and commitment to respect for human dignity and other values universally recognized as human rights. We also reaffirm our faith in a future marked by a better world, a world of peace and solidarity, a world from which war and all manner of violence, terrorism and discrimination are banished for ever, a world freed once and for all of the vestiges of colonialism, racism and injustice, a world marked by understanding, dialogue and cooperation.

We strongly urge the United States and the Soviet Union to preserve the gains of dialogue joined in the realm of disarmament, to the great relief of mankind, and we welcome the signing of the strategic arms reduction Treaty which took place on 31 July 1991 between the United States and the Soviet Union on the occasion of the Moscow summit. We also welcome the conclusion of the treaty on conventional disarmament between the East and West signed on 19 November 1990 in Paris by the Heads of State and Government of the 35 countries on the occasion of the summit meeting from 19 to 21 November of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. On the same occasion they signed a joint declaration solemnly putting an end to the cold war and affirming that they were no longer adversaries but rather had decided to establish new relations of friendship and partnership.

(Mr. Ngarukiyintwali, Rwanda)

We hail especially the decision taken by the United States and the Soviet Union in favour of a unilateral reduction in their nuclear arsenals. We welcome in advance the idea that the other major nuclear Powers will certainly follow suit.

Rwanda deeply believes in the United Nations and recognizes its indispensable role in maintaining peace, security and justice in the struggle to bring well-being to peoples the world over.

We express our sincere gratitude to the agencies throughout the United Nations system which are contributing to the social and economic development of mankind.

We support the establishment of a new and more fruitful North/South cooperation with a view to promoting more equitable economic and political ties between States. Such cooperation will serve the general interests of international peace and security and is likely to promote the economic recovery of all countries but especially the developing countries and among them the least developed.

In this spirit Rwanda will actively participate in the work of this forty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly and will constantly strive to make its contribution to the fulfilment of the noble objectives of the Charter. These include the attainment of a new international economic order for peoples the world over, within the context of equality, complementarity, understanding and solidarity, and a greater measure of peace, justice and well-being for people everywhere on Earth.

The PRESIDENT: Two representatives have asked to exercise the right of reply.

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to 5 minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

MR. EXARCHOS (Greece): The Greek delegation was surprised by what was said by the representative of Albania on 30 September when he spoke in exercising his right of reply to the speech of the Greek Foreign Minister. We were surprised both by what he said concerning the number of the Greek minority living in Albania and by his allegation about the presence of the so-called "Tsamis" in Greece.

First, let me say a few words about the Greek minority in Albania. The number of 60,000 people quoted by the Albanian represenative is based on an Albanian census conducted in 1989 and is simply not acceptable. In the conditions prevailing in Albania at that time the citizens of that country could not declare their ethnic identity.

Greece has never accepted the results of that so-called "census". In fact, in a statement made in the Third Committee of the General Assembly on 23 October 1989 (A/C.3/44/SR.15), the Greek delegation disputed the results of that census with regard to the Greek minority in Albania. It did so because the previous totalitarian regime arbitrarily recognized as members of the Greek minority only those residing in a specific corner of Albania. All other ethnic Greeks, even those who were born in that corner but later were moved

(Mr. Exarchos, Greece)

elsewhere, were and still are considered as non-Greeks. The fact is that members of the Greek minority - who amount, as the Greek Foreign Minister reminded this Assembly a few days ago, to several hundreds of thousands - are to be found all over Albania, although of course the bulk of the Greek population remains in their ancestral homes.

(Mr. Exarchos, Greece)

Furthermore, the educational rights of the Greek minority are subject to the same geographical restrictions. Even in those limited regions where Greek is taught, it is taught in the first four grades of elementary school only, while Greeks residing in other regions of Albania have no right to education in their mother tongue.

Now, with regard to the so-called "Tsamis" minority to which the Albanian representative referred, I wish to state once more that for us no such minority exists. What the Albanian Government includes in that so-called minority are all those individuals who, during the Second World War and the foreign occupation of my country, committed crimes against the Greek people in collaboration with the Nazi and Fascist occupation forces and, at the end of the war, withdrew voluntarily from Greece along with the occupation forces. It is unacceptable, under any pretext, to try to reverse the results of the Second World War, a war that cost Europe in general, and my country in particular, very dearly in terms of human lives and suffering.

We believe that Albania needs our support in its first steps towards democracy. The Greek Government has shown from the very beginning its willingness to be a friendly and supportive neighbour. Let it be known, however, that the attitude and behaviour of the Albanian authorities towards the Greek minority will be a determining factor in our relations.

Mr. KARUKUBIRO-KAMUNANWIRE (Uganda): We have listened to the statement made by the representative of Rwanda. At the appropriate time my head of delegation will respond to all the issues the delegation of Rwanda has raised against my country.

However, I should like to state briefly that before this body Rwanda must accept responsibility for its nationals. The representative of Rwanda has

(Mr. Karukubiro-Kamunanwire, Uganda)

admitted before the Assembly that Rwanda's refugee problem started way back in 1959. Since then, the Rwandese refugees who fled their country have been living as refugees in Uganda. Uganda is not a vast refugee camp for Rwanda to dump its unwanted nationals. They cannot live in Uganda for ever against their will.

I wish to deny categorically that Uganda has been involved in any way in an invasion of Rwanda. Neither does it support the refugees who are now inside Rwanda and fighting only inside Rwanda - and not on the soil of Uganda - for their own right to return. The Government of Rwanda must accept the responsibility for its nationals and must cooperate with the present regional efforts to solve its own civil war.

Mr. NGARUKIYINTWALI (Rwanda) (interpretation from French): I have just listened to the statement by the representative of Uganda, supposedly in reply to the statement I made before this body today.

The problem does not arise in terms of responsibility for nationals. Rwanda does feel responsible for its nationals. But we cannot accept that a neighbouring country, a friendly country - and, indeed, we have always regarded Uganda as a friendly country, and we continue to look upon it as a fraternal country, despite the critical situation that prevails - should allow aggressors to leave from its territory to invade our country.

I should have liked the representative of Uganda to deny that Major General Fred Rwigema had been the Ugandan Minister of Defence and deputy chief of staff of the Ugandan Army. I would have liked to hear the representative of Uganda deny that Major Benyenyezi, Major Peter Bayhingana and many others were officers in the Ugandan army.

(Mr. Ngarukiyintwali, Rwanda)

I do not wish to go into the situation in great depth, because I have heard that another statement will be made in reply to my statement to the Assembly. I should simply like to say that we are asking Uganda, which has signed international conventions, to respect them. They have signed the Declaration on the policy of good-neighbourliness. We are here in the General Assembly of the United Nations. Uganda is a Member of the Organization and a signatory to the Charter. It is a signatory to the Charter of the Organization of African Unity. We ask that those commitments freely undertaken be respected and that Uganda practice a policy of sincere good-neighbourliness with regard to Rwanda. Rwanda, for its part, remains prepared to respond positively. But Uganda must be watchful and control all the assailants who leave its territory to attack Rwanda.

I should like to state again that none of the troubles that disturb the peace in Rwanda originate on Rwandan territory. All of Rwanda's attackers come from the territory of Uganda. Many neutral international observers have noted this, and if there are others who wish to learn the facts, they can come to see for themselves.

We ask Uganda to practise a sincere policy of good-neighbourliness and to respect its commitments within the framework of the United Nations Charter and the Charter of the Organization of African Unity.

Mr. RUDI (Albania): Due to the lateness of the hour, the Albanian delegation would like to reserve its right to reply on some other day.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.